



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Task Force on Regulatory Efficiency Releases Interim Report 35 Proposals for Change Provisionally Accepted

BALTIMORE, MD (July 28, 2011)—In April 2011, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) launched an effort to identify regulatory improvements and make service to Maryland residents more efficient and effective. Following a public comment period, the Department's Task Force on Regulatory Efficiency is issuing its first [report](#).

The report finds many areas for improvement across regulation of skilled nursing facilities, assisted living homes, community mental health programs, programs serving individuals with developmental disabilities, and substance abuse treatment programs.

"I thank the Task Force for its hard work reviewing some great and challenging ideas from the public," said DHMH Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein. "This is an important step forward."

The Task Force reviewed 73 proposals from the public for regulatory change. The Task Force's draft response is to accept 20 of the proposals (27%), accept with modification 15 of the proposals (20.5%), seek additional information on 15 of the proposals (20.5%), and decline 23 of the proposals (31.5%).

Ideas receiving a favorable review include:

- **Allowing wireless call bell systems, instead of hard wired systems, in skilled nursing facilities.** This will allow modern systems to be implemented to benefit facility residents, while reducing costs for the facilities themselves.
- **Permitting clinicians in skilled nursing facilities to use electronic signatures rather than hand-written signatures for progress notes and medication orders.** This will clarify that modern, efficient electronic medical record systems are encouraged in skilled nursing facilities.
- **Altering requirements that skilled nursing facilities notify the state about individuals with conjunctivitis and other conditions.** Current regulations may be

overly prescriptive with respect to conditions that do not require this level of surveillance or precaution.

The next step in this process is a period of public comment on the Department's draft responses and requests for additional information. Comments will be accepted by email at wkronmiller@dhmh.state.md.us until August 26, 2011. In the fall, the Department intends to make final decisions on which proposals to implement and release a final report.

The Task Force is co-chaired by Wendy A. Kronmiller, Assistant Secretary for Regulatory Affairs at DHMH, and Mark Luckner, Executive Director, Community Health Resources Commission. Also participating are senior Department staff from all relevant divisions.

To read the Task Force Interim Report, visit
http://www.dhmh.md.gov/regulatoryefficiency/pdf/Interim_Report.pdf

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